

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Farr: Ease West Hartford Property Tax Burden by Establishing M. D. C. Sewer Use Fee



Requiring the Metropolitan District Commission to replace the current tax it imposes on member towns to pay for the operation of its district-wide sewer system with a user fee would ease the property tax burden on West Hartford residents and benefit the environment, state Representative Bob Farr, R-19th District, said today.

In testimony before the General Assembly's Planning and Development Committee, Representative Farr urged members of the panel to support a measure (House Bill 5096) he introduced that would change the way towns compensate the M. D. C. for operating the district-wide sewer system.

Currently, the M. D. C. bills member towns a yearly charge based on the amount of taxes each municipality collects annually. The bill would amend the M. D. C.'s charter to require it to establish a sewer use fee to replace the current ad valorem tax imposed on towns to finance the operation of the system.

"Under the present system, towns like West Hartford, which I represent, not only pay the highest taxes in the metropolitan district, but also receive the highest average sewer charges per household of any member community. Hartford pays an average of \$32 per household while West Hartford pays about \$143 per household," Representative Farr said.

"A sewer use charge is the fairest and most environmentally sound method the M. D. C. could use to calculate the charge it assesses for operating the system. It would mean each household would be billed based on how much it discharges into the sewer system; and since the charge would be based on use, it would create an incentive for households to make less use of the system," Representative Farr said.

"The sewer use fee the bill would establish would be essentially the same as the method currently used to calculate water bills, which is based on the amount of water used by each household served by the M. D. C.," Representative Farr noted. "If the bill passes, it would mean most households served by the M. D. C. would pay less on average for using the sewer system. It also would mean tax savings of about \$5 million per year for West Hartford and more than \$8 million annually for Hartford."

